



United States  
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Shasta-Trinity National Forest  
Trinity River Management Unit

Weaverville Ranger Station

P.O. Box 1190  
Weaverville, CA 96093  
(530) 623-2121  
(530) 623-2124 – TDD  
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/stnf>

File Code: 1950/2520

Date: April 27, 2011

Route To:

Subject: Soldier Creek Watershed Restoration Project Public Scoping Period

To: Project Participant

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest proposes to improve watershed conditions in the Soldier Creek Watershed through a watershed restoration project. This project is intended to improve the Forest's ability to provide a safe, effective transportation system while reducing adverse environmental impacts within the Soldier Creek watershed. The Shasta-Trinity National Forest is preparing to conduct National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and write an Environmental Assessment for the proposed actions.

### Your Involvement

You are invited to participate in the NEPA analysis for the Soldier Creek Watershed Restoration project by providing comments to us during this public scoping period. If you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of or feel you have issues (points of dispute, debate, or disagreement) regarding potential effects of this proposed action, please send those issues in writing to the address listed at the close of this letter. We will use any significant issues that are identified to develop alternatives to the Proposed Action.

### Purpose and Need for Action

The Forest is implementing this project as part of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) outlined in the Forest Plan. The ACS specifies nine objectives; activities that prevent attainment of these objectives are prohibited. The following three ACS objectives are particularly relevant to this project: 1) Maintain and restore the physical integrity of the aquatic system, including shorelines, banks, and bottom configurations; 2) Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems; 3) Maintain and restore the sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved. The project would not prevent attainment of the other 6 ACS objectives. The watershed does not occur within a key watershed. A Roads Analysis Process was completed for the watershed, and all roads recommended for treatment are included in this proposed action.

The purpose of the project is to implement the ACS, improving water quality and reducing existing negative environmental conditions by 1) decommissioning some roads that currently pose risks to water quality and watershed resources and that are not necessary for public or administrative access; and 2) modifying other roads to improve environmental conditions while maintaining necessary access.

### Proposed Action

The project proposes the following actions in the Soldier Creek watershed:



- decommission approximately 4 miles of unauthorized routes;
- decommission approximately 2 miles of Maintenance Level 1 roads;<sup>1</sup>
- improve approximately 3 miles of Maintenance Level 1 and 2 roads; and
- Issue special use permits<sup>2</sup> on approximately 3 miles of unauthorized routes.

**Table 1. Soldier Creek Watershed Restoration project proposed action.**

Route Number	Miles	Maintenance Level
<b>Improve<sup>a</sup></b>		
33N02 point	N/A (replace culvert)	2
33N19A	0.50	1
33N22	1.38	1
<b>Issue Special Use Permit<sup>b</sup></b>		
U33N41K	0.93	0
U33N48AB	0.12	0
UV33N48AC	0.13	0
U413	1.09	0
U413C	0.25	0
U413D	0.11	0
U413E	0.18	0
<b>Short Term Decommission<sup>c</sup></b>		
33N23	0.60	1
33N23A	0.60	1
33N41H	0.10	1
33N41J	0.20	1
U33N23AA	0.05	0
U33N41A	0.22	0
U33N41AD	0.35	0
U33N41KA	0.56	0
U33N41L	0.14	0
U413A	0.56	0
U413B	0.07	0
<b>Long Term Decommission<sup>c</sup></b>		
U33N02A	0.38	0
U33N41AB	0.27	0
U33N41ABA	0.13	0
UV33N02C	0.55	0

<sup>a</sup>Improve: Road improvements are designed to reduce road prism and fill erosion by creating rolling-dips to break up water flow and dissipate energy off-slope. Various treatments of low-water crossings or critical-dips are used to improve crossings for large flow events. The purpose is to create a more self-staining road that requires less maintenance. Improvements are generally spots or sections of the road and not the entire length.

<sup>b</sup>Special Use Permit: Issue special use permit to allow access for private land in-holdings, mining claims, and community utilities. The special use permit would require gating the route and road maintenance by the permittee.

<sup>c</sup>Decommissioning: Decommissioning may include removing culverts, ripping road surfaces, regrading road surface to a downhill slope, removing inner ditches, removing berms, and/or installing an earthen barrier, as well as other measures to meet site-specific needs. The goal is to control surface runoff, erosion, and mass failure. Short-term decommission refers to roads that are ready for decommissioning in the near future pending NEPA analysis. Long-term decommission refers to roads that are needed in the near future for management but after use are decommissioned.

<sup>1</sup> **Definitions of road maintenance levels from the 2008 Travel Routes Data Dictionary**

Maintenance Level 1: Basic Custodial Care - Assigned to intermittent service roads during time they are closed to vehicular traffic for 1 year or more.

Maintenance Level 2: High Clearance Vehicles - Assigned to roads operated for use by high clearance vehicles.

Maintenance Level 3: Suitable for Passenger Cars - Assigned to roads operated and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car.

<sup>2</sup> Special use permits would require gating the route and road maintenance by the permittee.

Actions are proposed on the Big Bar Ranger District. Project maps that show proposed activities are available on the internet: [http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa\\_project\\_exp.php?project=35257](http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=35257). Hard copy maps are available through Brad Rust at (530) 226-2427 or by e-mail at: [brust@fs.fed.us](mailto:brust@fs.fed.us).

### **Decision to be Made**

The District Ranger will decide whether to implement the proposed action, implement an alternative action that meets the purpose and need, or take no action.

### **Where to Send Comments**

Please send your written comments to: Brad Rust, Soldier Creek Watershed Restoration Project, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, 3644 Avtech Parkway, Redding, CA 96002. Electronic comments can be sent via e-mail to: [comments-pacificsw-shasta-trinity-bigbar-weaverville@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificsw-shasta-trinity-bigbar-weaverville@fs.fed.us); indicate "Soldier Creek Watershed Restoration Project" in the subject line.

After 30 days from the date of this notice, the interdisciplinary team will review all of the scoping comments received, identify additional issues from the scoping comments that need to be addressed in the proposed action or any additional alternatives, and begin analyzing the alternatives. Scoping comments should be as specific as possible in order for the Forest Service to identify and consider each issue or concern. Your input and participation are encouraged. While comments will be accepted and considered up until the decision is made, timely submission of scoping comments is important for them to be fully considered and incorporated into the proposed action or any additional alternatives as appropriate. To ensure your comments can be fully considered by the interdisciplinary team and Responsible Official, please respond by close of business on **June 3, 2011**. Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection (Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 21).

We appreciate your interest in the management of public lands. Please contact Brad Rust if you would like any additional information about this project.

/s/ Tina Lynsky  
TINA LYNSKY  
District Ranger